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SUBJECT: CULTURE AND EDUCATION APPOINTMENTS IN TURKMENISTAN -- MORE  
OF THE SAME

SUMMARY AND COMMENT

1. (U) President Berdimuhammedov's February 21 appointments in the cultural and educational sectors represent no break with the past, though in the case of the Institute of Culture and state daily newspaper, Neutral Turkmenistan, they may signal some change in the operation of the affected institutes. END SUMMARY.

Ministry of Culture

2. (U) The reappointment of Enebay Atayeva as Minister of Culture is unsurprising, as she has appeared confident and in control since her appointment to the post in April 2006. Post's relationship with the Ministry of Culture has been cooperative under Atayeva.

3. (U) Harkening back to previous years, the president appointed a separate rector for the Institute of Culture (Turkmenistan's institute of higher cultural education), Hudainazar Amangeldiyev. Until now the Minister of Culture had served as acting rector of the Institute. Post believes the appointment of Amangeldiyev is basically a recognition that one person cannot do both of these jobs.

4. (U) Jeren Taimova, director of Turkmenistan's state print media service since 2001, fills the empty position of Editor-in-Chief of Turkmenistan's largest-circulation daily newspaper, Neutral Turkmenistan (Russian, circ. 35,091). Late Editor Viktor Mihaylov had a reputation for being very controlling of journalists. Taimova's reputation is slightly less harsh, but she has been avoiding contact with post since a February 2006 incident, when a state journalist attempted to film all the participants at an embassy-sponsored public event and was removed from the event by embassy security. One Neutral Turkmenistan journalist with whom post has regular contact has suggested post request formal permission to resume normal contact -- a patently abnormal request in and of itself.

5. (U) Maya Mollayeva was reappointed the State Archives Director, a post she has held for many years. Mollayeva has not demonstrated

any openness in the past of which post is aware.

Ministry of Education

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16. (U) The appointment of Chary Tugiyev as Rector of the Azadi World Languages Institute (he had been vice rector, then Acting Rector) is disappointing, if not surprising. Tugiyev met with the former Public Affairs Officer and the Cultural Affairs Officer in 2005, and had some contact with post's former English Language Fellow. He is perceived as uncooperative with post programs and even rude in his interactions with post and the Fellow. The vice rector appointed in Tugiyev's place, Orazov Allaberdi Resulovich, comes most recently from dealing with education issues at the Cabinet of Ministers, but in the early 1990s served as the Dean of the Russian Language department of the Institute.

17. (U) Post awaits word on the fate of former Minister of Education, Shemshat Annagylyjova, who so far retains the post of rector of the International Turkmen Turkish University. The Minister of Justice retains the position of rector of Turkmen State University (following the demotion of the obstructive Rejep Kalayev, who is now rector of Turkmenabat Pedagogical Institute).

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